

COMMUNITY BUILDING STRATEGIES IN ONLINE ENGLISH  
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR CULTURALLY  
DIVERSE ADULT LEARNERS

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## **Abstract**

Culturally diverse adult ESL learners have always heavily relied on the face-to-face concept of ESL classes where they could explore and practice the language in a safe community, construct meaning through direct interactions, and ask for clarification while sharing a similar learning path with others in the group. Pandemic imposed transition to fully online adult ESL classes presented significant challenges for instructors at community colleges as well as learners themselves. This unexpected change took away these opportunities, leaving space for insecurities, doubts, and struggles in the new learning space. Therefore, this paper aims to provide insight into activities and strategies that have been practically assessed and successful in building an online community that closely resembles the in-person classroom experience. In this process, the emphasis is placed on establishing solid social presence, keeping focus on principles of exemplary teaching, and maintaining culture at the heart of one's interactions and instruction.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Marija and Vlado, who have taught me the value of education and instilled the love of learning in me since early age. I also dedicate my thesis to my husband Toma who has always supported me throughout my educational and career endeavors and never stopped believing that I can achieve all of my dreams.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Plaisance for her professionalism and dedication to the success of all students in this program. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Elena King for all of the encouragement, kindness, trust, and knowledge I experienced as her student. Special thanks to my professors: Paula Wilder, Abby Dobs, Degania Fortson, and Timothy Sims for the abundance of expertise, patience, support, and valuable feedback throughout my studies that made this an excellent learning experience.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult learners in the classroom for nearly two decades, I noticed that I had excellent retention rates, and my students explicitly told me they appreciated my class and instruction. These students explained that they could tell I genuinely cared and that the class felt like family. I realized how significant my engagement with them, and the creation of a classroom community were to their success and enjoyment of the class.

In March of 2019, as I finished teaching my first quarter advanced ESL class at Forsyth Technical Community College (FTCC), the college was suddenly forced to move all classes online due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. This move was challenging to both instructors and students. A disconnect between instructor and learners, difficulty replicating the classroom atmosphere, lack of childcare, pandemic-related stress, and technological challenges were major problems that affected my classes. Most significantly, many of the ESL learners felt isolated and alone after having lost that invaluable in-person classroom community. They struggled to maintain motivation, and I struggled to create effective instruction.

Despite being an experienced ESL instructor, I was forced to experiment with numerous platforms and approaches in order to engage, retain, and help my culturally diverse adult learners grow. I knew I needed to bring my learners together, but I did not know how. I explored more than two dozen options, subscribed to numerous service providers, and learned how to navigate

through many previously unknown resources. During that time, I wished there had been a guide or a manual that could have helped me with this transition and provided less costly alternatives.

In the current situation with the pandemic, online adult ESL instruction does not appear to be a temporary situation. For that reason, it is vitally important that ESL instructors working with adult culturally diverse learners (CDLs) provide instruction that can match the community building experience that motivates students during in-person learning. My resources quest on this topic yielded few results. Much of the community building research has been geared towards the K-12 segment of teaching ESL and CDLs and pertains to in-person learning.

This personal struggle, combined with the discrepancy between the community experience of in-person learning and the difficulty of building the same online, inspired me to explore this topic. My goal is to create a one-hour professional development workshop for instructors and educators who teach ESL to culturally diverse adult learners, as well as reading and literacy coaches who work in the Workforce Development Department at FTCC in Winston-Salem, NC. Also, I intend to offer the workshop to the broader community of adult ESL and CDL instructors through Carolina TESOL and the TESOL International Conference. During the workshop, participants will become familiar with multiple strategies for building a closely-knit, engaged, online community.

Hellman et al. (2019) confirmed that the six principles for exemplary teaching of English learners pertain equally to adult learners as they do to K-12 students, and “are applicable to all contexts for teaching adult English learners” (p.3). The six principles are: Know your learners; Create conditions for language learning; Design high-quality lessons for language development; Adapt lesson delivery as needed; Monitor and assess student language development; and Engage and collaborate within a community of practice. The first two principles are closely related to the

concept of building a community. Consequently, the major focus of this workshop will be equipping instructors with practical and effective strategies that will assist with applying these two principles to online instruction. They will be able to deliver online instruction with confidence and the knowledge that their adult learners know they belong to a class that feels like family. By applying these community building strategies to their online ESL classes, instructors can rest assured that all essential and beneficial conditions for language learning will be met and will contribute to an environment conducive to learning. Ultimately, my intention for this workshop is to benefit the adult ESL learners participating in online ESL instruction directly, as I am confident that these students will positively respond to being “valued members of a learning community” (Hammond, 2015, p. 47).



## **Chapter 2: Literary Review**

Learning a language requires interaction, which makes it a social process. In order to engage in meaningful exchange, the language learners must be comfortable in their learning environment, with their instructor, and with each other. Prior research studies substantiate the idea that building an effective learning community is closely related to increased student success, eases the transition from dependent to independent learning, increases motivation, and leads to better quality of learning overall (Hammond, 2015; Hellman, 2019; Romero, 2012; Feng et al., 2017). Furthermore, the instructor's understanding of the processes involved in online learning plays a vital role in whether it can be achieved successfully or not (Schindler & Burkholder, 2014).

In this chapter, I examine scholarship related to the factors that contribute to building a successful online learning community for culturally diverse adult ESL learners. First, I provide an overview of the digital learning context as a different environment from the face-to-face classroom. I then discuss the application of social presence and its scaffolds through the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework as it applies to learning a second language. In the same manner, I examine relevant contributing data on factors that contribute to community building. Some of the factors that are discussed, such as motivation, facilitative emotional conditions, cultural awareness, feedback, and the brain functions, are more specific to classroom community building. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of these factors on the creation of a safe, student-centered, and learning friendly online community.

## **Understanding the Digital Learning Context**

The advancement of technology and the digitalization of education have played a significant role in promoting learning (Dudney & Hockly, 2016), bridging physical distance, and bringing people from vastly different educations, backgrounds, and experiences together (Rose, 2015). Rose (2015) elaborated in detail about how a digitally enabled classroom or course goes beyond time-zones, borders, internet penetration, physical location, and cultural norms with the single common goal of learning English.

However, despite the ability of online education to connect learners and educators, the online learning context is frequently perceived as a context of isolation and disconnect (Andrei & Salerno, 2018; Rovai et al., 2005). Students are often skeptical about the engagement and interaction potential of an online course (Gilmetdinova et al., 2018), the quality of the education they receive in this format, and the correlation between the learning style one exhibits in a physical classroom versus an online one (Ates & Graham, 2018). Adult ESL learners face additional challenges in the digital world. Depending on their background, education, and access to the internet, many adult ELLs fear the digital classroom because they have little or no experience with technology (Hellman et al., 2019; Rose, 2015). Even if they are technologically savvy, many experience difficulties with navigating the digital learning environment (Feng et al., 2017), transferring knowledge between tools and platforms (Chang & Windeatt, 2018), and failure to construct meaning due to lack of body language and face-to-face communication (Casal & Lee, 2018). The lack of gestures and face-to-face interactions intensifies often false pre-assumptions that other participants fare far better (Rose, 2015), which additionally increases students' affective filters (Parrish, 2004) and foreign language learning anxiety (Trang et al., 2013). The same is true for instructors who have to be proficient enough in technology in order

to help their students who struggle with it (Feng et al., 2017). Additionally, educators must understand the nuances of the positive-oriented digital context (Andrei & Salerno, 2018).

However, technical expertise alone is insufficient without linguistic competence and knowledge about how to connect the two, choose the most suitable tools from the multitude of options, and master the ones that will benefit learners the most (Chang & Windeatt, 2018).

### **Community of Inquiry Framework (CoI)**

When Garrison et al. (2000) proposed the CoI framework as a theoretical model, it was the first comprehensive endeavor that addressed most aspects of online learning in one place. Since then, this framework has been the foundation for numerous studies and other researchers have used it as the backbone for their research on different aspects of online learning (Arbaugh, 2007; Chang & Windeatt, 2018; Feng et al., 2017; Rovai et al., 2005). This framework proposed three different presences that are vital for successful online education: cognitive, teaching, and social (Garrison et al., 2000). The teaching presence encompasses the role of the instructor in the delivery of content and learning outcomes, which has proven to be a significant factor in student satisfaction, their perception of acquired knowledge and their sense of classroom community (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). The cognitive presence refers to the sustained collaborative efforts learners must make in order to construct meaning (Feng et al., 2017; Gilmetdinova et al., 2018). The social presence is the personal and emotional projection of the learner's true identity and the way this perception aids the development of inter-personal relationships within the group (Feng et al., 2017; Garrison et al., 2000; Gilmetdinova et al., 2018). The three presences are frequently represented as overlapping models of equal importance. However, in recent years, the

significance of the social presence as a binding element has significantly shaped inquiry into CoI as it relates to online learning.

### **Social Presence as a Community Building Factor**

Social presence in online learning is irrevocably comparable to the socially mediated learning in the face-to-face classroom where students collaborate, interact, clarify misconceptions, and construct meaning through discourse (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Similarly, in their research study, Gilmetdinova et al. (2018) considered peer-to-peer interactions, as well as interactions between the learners and their instructor to be “the key element to building a dialogue and sense of connectedness in online courses” (p. 16). Drawing on the experiences of instructors and online language learners involved in their study, Gilmetdinova et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of establishing a presence through voice as it humanizes the sterile and silent asynchronous online environment (p. 20). Other studies on social presence have confirmed the more prominent role that social presence plays in the level of students’ engagement, the ability to build rapport and mutual support, and in encouraging students to construct meaning (Armellini & De Stefani, 2016; Guitierrez-Santiuste & Gallego-Arrufat, 2017; Guler, 2018; Richardson et al., 2017; Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2017).

Social presence in an online course can be measured through three dimensions: group cohesion, open communication, and emotional expression (Garrison et al., 2000). In their research study, Feng et al. (2017) explored how these three models act as scaffolds and argued the benefit of the right timing and degree of their application at different stages of the course. Their research study confirmed that the increased social presence through these three dimensions at the beginning of the course sets the stage for positive experience on the part of the learners

(Feng et al., 2017, p. 175). These findings also demonstrated that not only did the high social presence at the initial stage enable gradual withdrawal of the other scaffolds, but it remained high and increased over time, leading learners to “feel that it’s also possible to build an atmosphere or culture of class in an online course” (Feng et al., 2017, p. 175). Furthermore, Feng et al. (2017) proposed a fourth scaffold, environment acclimation, which equips the learners to utilize and navigate the tools of the learning environment before any content learning occurs. The implementation of the environment acclimation scaffold affects the level of readiness and engagement of the learners in an online course (Feng et al., 2017, p. 164).

Finally, in the CoI framework, the social presence is not observed as an instructor-dominated model, but rather a two-way function where both the instructor and the learners participate in its creation (Rourke et al., 2001).

### **Conditions That Contribute to Community Building**

In order to establish social presence as an essential ingredient for online community, a number of conditions must be present. Hellman et al. (2019) identified five conditions as essential: neurophysiological capacity, motivation, facilitative emotional conditions, usable input and feedback, and deliberate practice (p. 16). Hellman et al. (2019) further asserted that the presence of other conditions would be beneficial: relatedness of the native and target language, the first language oracy and literacy skills, avid reading, prior education, cultural knowledge and ability to read social situations, personality factors, regular access to competent speakers of the target language, opportunities to use the target language, integrative motivation in the speech community, and high-quality instruction (pp. 17-18). Elaborating on the significance of these conditions for the adult ESL learners, Hellman et al. (2018) stated that “when teachers pair their

understanding of the conditions for second language learning with knowledge of each of their adult English learner's background, educational history, and personal characteristics, they can maximize the conditions that they control or shape" (p. 19) and optimize them for any teaching context. Some of these are indispensable to the online learning environment and the process of building a tight community in the virtual classroom.

**Motivation.** The transition from a face-to face to virtual community often requires significant adjustment to the cue absent digital world (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2007), and emphasizes the importance of maintaining adequate motivation within the group. Motivation is considered to be one of the key goals in technology based learning (Barger & Byrd, 2011). High motivation prevents boredom in an online course (Gilmetdinova et al., 2018; Lima, 2018), and the instructor is in a position to control it, primarily by understanding what internal forces drive the individuals' learning (Hellman et al., 2019). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, as cited in Hellman et al., 2019) discussed the importance of guided visualization of the students' successful future selves as a powerful tool in building and sustaining motivation (p. 38).

**Facilitative emotional conditions.** Learning cannot occur in an environment where students experience anxiety and negative emotional conditions (Hellman et al., 2019; Shapiro et al., 2014; Trang et al., 2013). In that sense, to create facilitative emotional conditions, instructors must understand that in their interactions with the learners, their goal is not solely to teach English language skills, but to genuinely apply the first and second principles for the exemplary teaching of adult English learners: know your learners and create conditions for language learning (Hellman et al., 2019). Getting to know the learners and establishing the framework of social interactions within the group must take place before students experience stress or start feeling overwhelmed (Shapiro et al., 2014). Shapiro et al. (2014) suggested ice breakers, clearly

established expectations, and ways to ask for help as significant contributors to a smooth, stressless classroom experience (pp. 55-60). Instructors who invest time to educate themselves on their learners' backgrounds and prior educational experiences, home language(s) and cultures of each student, as well as possible challenges students might face (Hellman et al., 2019; Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019; Shapiro et al., 2014), are implementing the steps that lead to lowering the affective filter (Parrish, 2004) and the levels of foreign language anxiety (Herrera & Murry, 2016).

**Cultural awareness.** The practice of creating a vibrant, safe, and nurturing classroom community is not possible without fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019). Culture is ingrained in each and every one of us and represents our shared beliefs, norms, values, behaviors and artefacts. It governs students' emotional responses, their views on the world, their behaviors with coworkers and peers, the relationships students build with their instructors, and the way they perceive education (Hellman et al., 2019; Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019). Herrera and Murry (2016) determined that "highly effective teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners take time to understand and build on student experiences associated with this dimension" (p. 11). Biography-driven instruction was suggested as a highly-effective model for diverse learners; it addresses the learners' sociocultural dimension, which "encompasses student's heritage, culture, family interactions, and more" (Herrera & Murry, 2016, p. 11). Hellman et al. (2019) suggested that cultural awareness plays a significant role in the social climate enabling diverse participants to act as cultural informants, thus learning from each other and respecting the differences. Similarly, cultural awareness is an indispensable tool for the English language instructors. Being culturally competent ensures that there will be no stereotyping, generalization, and prejudice in

the classroom (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019). Being culturally competent enables both, instructors and learners to “overcome certain personal, social, and contextual barriers to achieve effective communication - that is, apply ICC” (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019, p. 18).

Furthermore, it is vital for instructors to teach cultural awareness explicitly and in the prism of pragmatics because language learning and culture are inseparable (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019; Shapiro et al., 2014).

Another significant part of cultural awareness is the notion of identity. Griffer and Perlis (2007) described multiperspective identity as essential to developing cultural intelligence. Similarly to the goal of biography-driven instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2016), Griffer and Perlis (2007) proposed a process of developing a map of one’s own cultural perspectives, identifying the dominant identity areas, and gaining insight into the worldview of others. If identity and cultural diversity are not approached, addressed, and taught intentionally in the classroom, they are likely to result in (spoken or unspoken) cultural conflicts that affect the learning process, interactions, and the classroom community in general (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019).

**Feedback.** Feedback is one of the most essential strategies an instructor can use in the classroom. In order to help the learners meet the lesson objectives and get a clear picture of the instructor’s expectations, feedback must be continuous, constructive, and specific (Herrera & Murry, 2016). Shapiro et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of pairing feedback with cultural appropriateness. Given that feedback represents constructive criticism, instructors must understand the different positions students hold in a particular social hierarchy and apply “cultural know-how and careful use of language” (Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019, p. 148). Feedback that is instructive rather than evaluative, timely, specific, wise, and delivered in low-stress, supportive environment, maximizes the neuroplasticity of the brain and helps the learners



adjust their learning moves, acquire new learning strategies, and improve their performance (Hammond, 2015).

### **The Brain Connection**

The human brain is the driving force in everything we do. In recent years, extensive research has been devoted to the connection of second language learning and the brain. Learning a second language has been confirmed to cause functional and structural changes in the brain (Cao, 2016; Mercado, 2008). The human brain associates pleasant experiences with relaxation, safety and release of dopamine, serotonin, and other endorphins (Hammond, 2015). Additionally, being a social organ, the brain does not function in isolation; it thrives on connections, interaction, and communication (Hanson, 2013; Hasson et al., 2010; Zull, 2002). Language is also a social phenomenon and as such has the power to connect or divide (Kovacevic et al.; 2018). When learners experience a learning community where their identities are acknowledged and respected, the brain activates the release of chemical substances associated with motivation, pleasure, and safety (Hanson, 2013; Hasson et al., 2010; Porges, 2011). Research on the effects of culturally responsive teaching on the brain has also proven that “the brain uses culture to make sense of the world” (Hammond, 2015, p. 36). Hammond (2016) further elaborated that principles such as basic directive to feel and stay safe, motivation, and attention direct how input is interpreted, processed and retained. Instructors who are perceived as caring generate trust, and trust affects relationships by acting as an affective glue that binds people in a community (Brookfield, 2000 as cited in Hammond, 2015; Gay, 2010).

## Conclusion

The concept of community building is not a new concept in scholarship. The notion that community building positively affects the classroom climate and influences learning outcomes has also been studied and researched extensively. The challenges that instructors and adult learners face today, pertain primarily to the unexpected change of the learning environment. In 2013, the adult ESL population in community colleges averaged 25-44 years of age and made up 40% of the adult education population in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Most of these learners are people who have full or part time jobs while learning English as a second language. Many have families and handle multiple responsibilities. The face-to-face adult ESL classes at community colleges have been the lifeline of these learners; a place where they form meaningful relationships, learn through student-centered activities, and build their language skills in a safe environment. The sudden transition to online ESL classes brought significant challenges in maintaining the same parameters for teaching and learning. Adult ESL learners must be given the same learning opportunities in the virtual classroom that they had experienced in the face-to-face environment. Understanding how these two environments differ is the first step to adjustment to the new normal. Instructors have a crucial role in creating conditions for learning in their online courses that will closely resemble the community experience adult ELLs are accustomed to. Therefore, knowing what conditions to optimize and what strategies to apply in the process of building an online community will significantly improve the teaching and learning experience for instructors and students alike.

### **Chapter 3: Project Design**

In this chapter, I explain the rationale behind my project - a professional development workshop for instructors of adult ESL and culturally diverse learners who teach ESL online. The goal of the workshop is to assist community college ESL instructors, as well as reading and literacy coaches in the Workforce Development departments in creating an online community that resembles the face-to-face experience as closely as possible.

Traditionally, ESL classes at community colleges were an in-person experience that contributed largely to connecting learners' different educational backgrounds, experiences, ages, religions, beliefs, and goals, all with one common denominator – learning English. Paired with the shift towards student-centered and culturally relevant instruction, these ESL classes provided optimal conditions for meaningful interactions and language acquisition. To promote community, instructors created opportunities for the learners to get to know each other and become involved in decision making within the group, which is at the heart of the first principle of exemplary teaching of adult ELLS: Know your learners (Hellman, 2019). Furthermore, the ability to observe body language and ask for clarifications were tremendous aid in constructing meaning during pair or small-group work.

The sudden switch to fully online classes that happened in the first months of 2020 due to the pandemic, caught community colleges, instructors, and adult ELLs unprepared. Having experienced the well-intended but chaotic efforts to adjust to the new normal, I recognized the need to create a resource that will facilitate this process. My project is the brainchild of a trial-

and-error experiences, involving time-consuming and costly probes into different digital products, relatively new platforms, and adapted teaching strategies.

The process of building an online community of adult ESL learners starts with establishing a solid social presence at the very beginning of the course. For that purpose, I propose a course of actions that will address the most important aspects in this process:

- environmental acclimation, which prepares learners to overcome the technological challenges of the course;
- group cohesion, which establishes and nurtures the feeling of community;
- emotional expressions, which creates facilitative emotional conditions;
- open communication, which enables explicit instruction, space for growth and dismantling bias (Feng et al., 2017; Garrison et al., 2000)

Increased technological advances and teaching with technology have seen an explosive growth in the world of education. When faced with multiple options and platforms where each claim to be the solution to online instruction, instructors and students can easily feel overwhelmed and lose motivation. Therefore, the workshop offers several concrete strategies and suggestions that instructors can apply or choose from depending on their specific teaching situation and need, without compromising the goal of building their online classroom community. Most importantly, these solutions and strategies are carefully chosen to reflect the principles of exemplary teaching of adult ESL learners online and keep culturally responsive teaching at the forefront of the course (Hammond, 2015; Hellman, 2019; Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019; Shapiro et al., 2014).

Finally, in all teaching contexts, instructors must be aware of the importance of the social and linguistic capital, personal goals, and background knowledge adults bring to the table

(Hellman, 2019; Parrish, 2004). For that reason, it is pivotal to never lose sight of the relevance and practical application of all content instructors choose to teach. Adults do not come to ESL classes to socialize, but to accomplish a learning goal, and the community building is simply creating that favorable environment for them to do so. The workshop addresses this aspect by offering sample ideas on how to keep authenticity and relevance in the content we teach digitally, while maintaining the social presence and the sense of community intact.

## **Chapter 4: Professional Development Workshop**

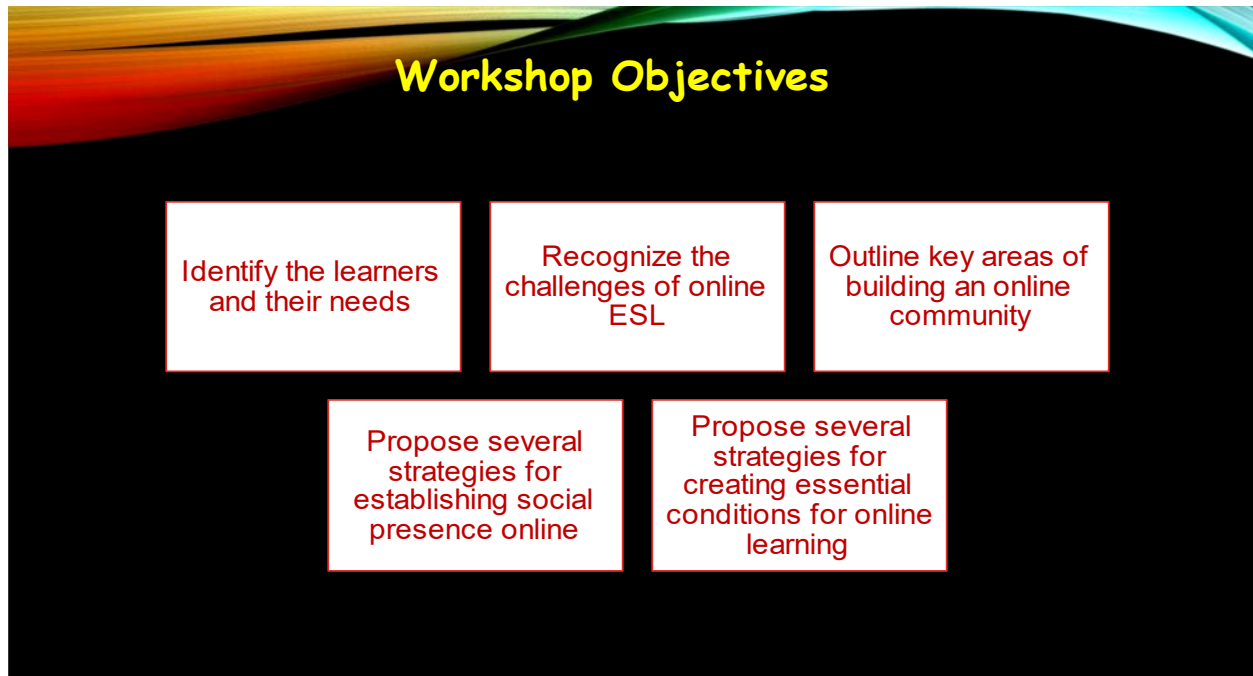
This professional development workshop is designed to assist ESL instructors who teach culturally and linguistically diverse adult learners primarily in the setting of community colleges, and within the Workforce Development departments. Other instructors, such as reading and literacy coaches, who have transitioned to a fully online model as well, would also benefit from this professional development.

The goal of the workshop is to address the element of community building in this new environment as a significant factor to students' participation, level of engagement and achievement, as well the percentage of retention. It offers several alternatives and how-to strategies that can be implemented at the beginning of an online ESL course in order to establish social presence. It also suggests concrete tools/platforms that can be used to address the creation of essential conditions for learning alongside the community.

The workshop itself is designed to be delivered through a PowerPoint presentation (See Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation) that incorporates other visual and/or audio support. It consists of several stages that flow into each other but keep the focus on community building activities and strategies.

### **Introduction**

The workshop begins with a title page, followed by its objectives (Figure 4.1. See also Appendix A, Slide #2).



**Figure 4.1: Workshop objectives**

Next, the focus moves to the first objective, which is to identify our learners and their needs. The slide titled: “Who are our Learners and What They Bring to the Table” aims to explain what things make adult CDLs unique, what drives their learning, and how their backgrounds and experiences contribute to the process (Hellman et al., 2019; Herrera & Murry, 2016; Parrish, 2004; Rose, 2015). The slide offers visual support in the form of two authentic photographs from two actual diverse groups of adult ESL learners (Figure 4.2. See also Appendix A, Slide #3)



**Figure 4.2: Who are our learners and what they bring to the table**

In Slide #4 the narrative shifts to the actual problems that instructors and students experienced as classes migrated online (Figure 4.3. See also Appendix A: Slide #4). I chose to put emphasis on the environmental challenges, which represent the loss of the physical connection typical for the classroom setting (Gilmetdinova et al., 2018) as well as the newly created technological challenges that arose from that situation (Andrei & Salerno, 2018; Rovai et al., 2005). The slide has a visual representation of an adult staring at a laptop screen, looking overwhelmed by what he is facing, reading, or looking at. On top of the photo the caption that reads: “What we think we say is often not what our students perceive,” links to an 8-minute *YouTube* video of an adult training event. The intention is not to show the whole video but focus on three or four portions of it in the duration of several seconds. The video plays a dual purpose; first, my goal is to provide a mental break at this point, but also to use this modified telephone game to communicate an important message about the adult learners. Similar to the telephone



game, instructors often intend to pass around a message to the group, but depending on personal experiences, backgrounds, culture, beliefs, education, religion, etc., the perception of the same message can differ. Therefore, the role of the instructor is indispensable. The next stage of the workshop is introduced by a quote from Glenda Rose (2015) and her book: *Perspectives on Teaching Adults in the Digital World* where she acknowledged the role of the instructor as vital in online language teaching (Figure 4.4. See also Appendix A, Slide #5).

## THE DISCONNECT CHALLENGES

### Environmental

- "Far from the eyes, far from the heart"
- Lack of auditory/visual stimuli
- No face-to-face interaction and body language
- Time & space issues
- The "this is not for me" attitude
- "What if I am the worst?"

### What we think we say

### is often not what our students perceive

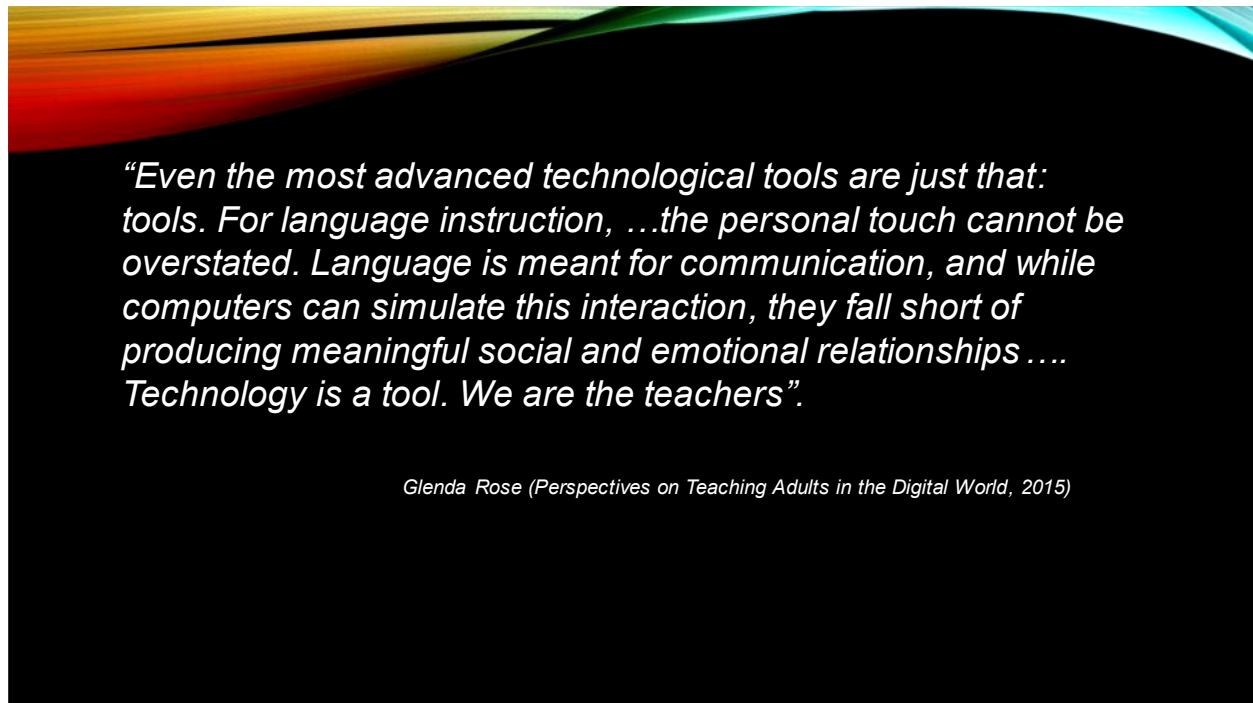


<https://images.app.goo.gl/X19GKRUGrt1JPtXU8>

### Technological

- The no-tech student
- The tech expert student
- The phone only student
- Internet
- Different platforms
- Camera/video anxiety

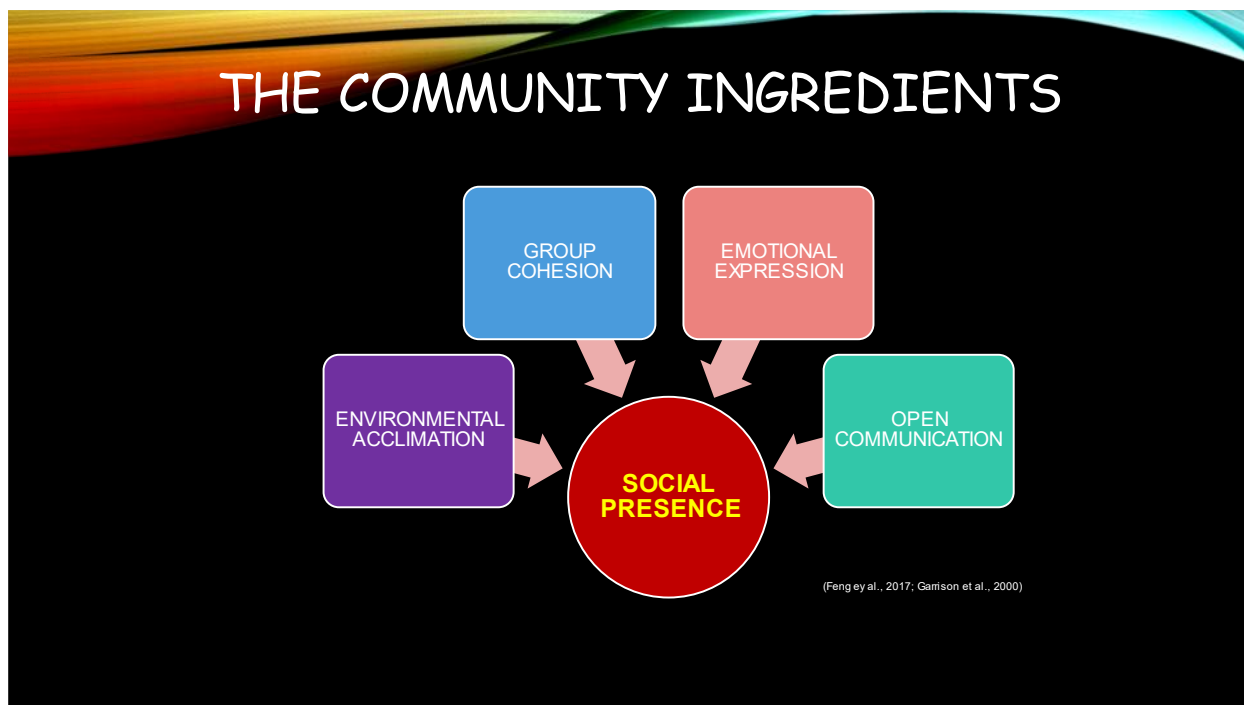
**Figure 4.3: The disconnect challenges**



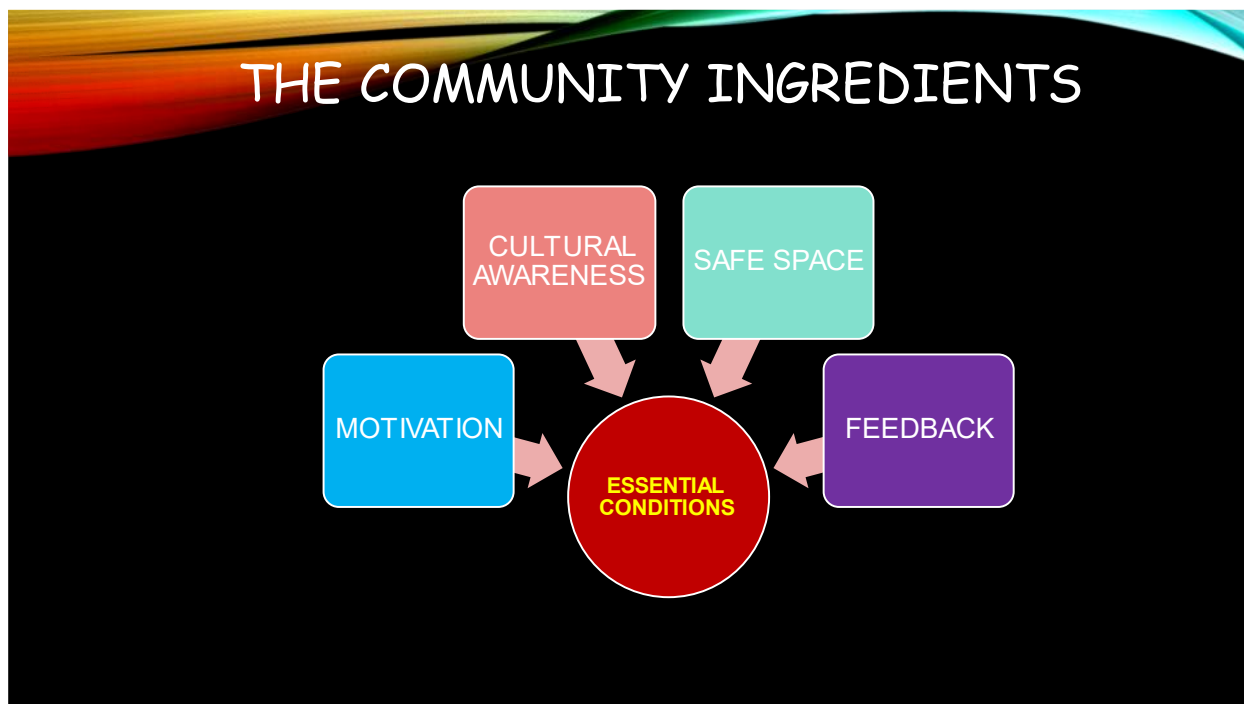
**Figure 4.4: Quote by Glenda Rose**

### **The Research Behind**

The next stage of the workshop conveys research-based ideas that contribute to successful community building in online classes. The first graphic (Figure 4.5. See also Appendix A, Slide #6) features social presence as the most essential ingredient in community building together with its four scaffolds: environmental acclimation, group cohesion, emotional expression, and open communication (Feng et al., 2017; Garrison et al., 2000). The second graphic (Figure 4.6. See also Appendix A, Slide #7) features four essential conditions that play a significant role in community building: motivation, cultural awareness, safe space, and feedback (Barger & Byrd, 2011; Hellman et al., 2019; Herrera & Murry, 2016; Lindholm & Mednick Myles, 2019). Each of the graphics elements will be briefly addressed as more practical suggestions follow further on in the workshop.



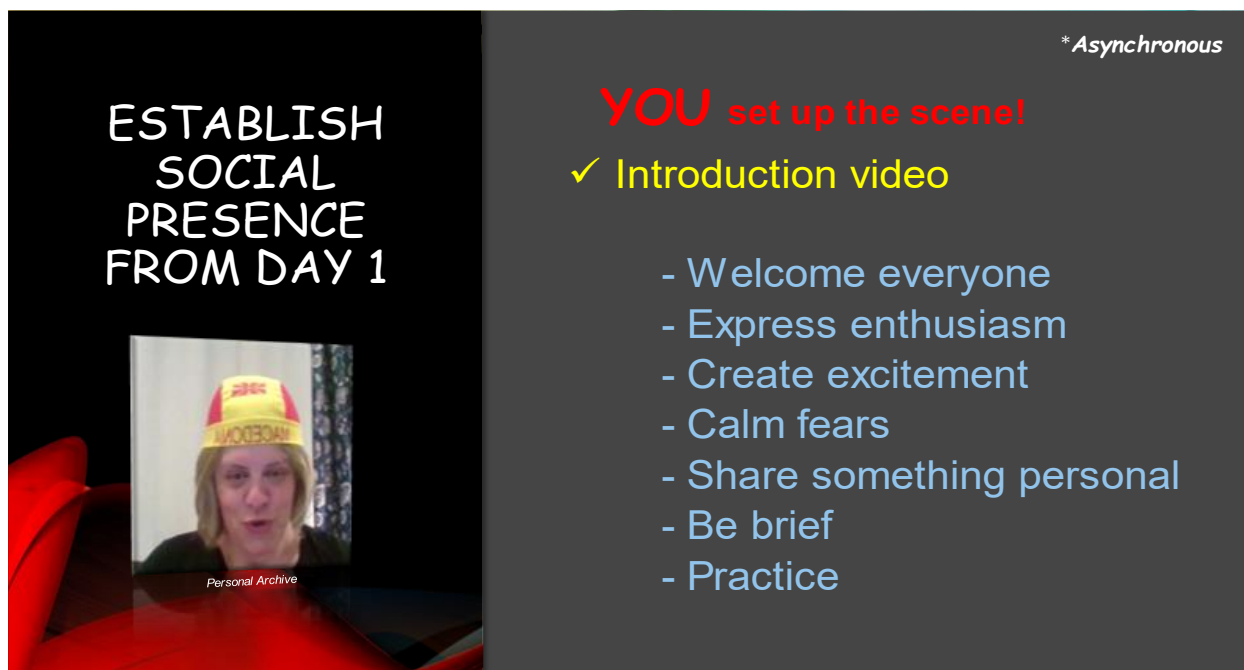
**Figure 4.6: The Community ingredients: Social Presence**



**Figure 4.7: The Community ingredients: Essential Conditions**

## Building Social Presence

After presenting the research-based models, the workshop continues with a concrete suggestion: an introduction video from the instructor to the students, and one from each student to the instructor and the group. Slide #8 lays out seven guidelines about making an introduction video, such as how to start, how to look, what to say, and how to make the most of it (Figure 4.7. See also Appendix A, Slide #8). It also features a snapshot from one of my introduction videos recorded for my students in 2020. I was proud to share about my origins and wanted to create an immediate sense of belonging with other people from different cultures. Reaching out to students by combining visual and audio in combination with the instructor's tone of voice, facial expressions, and carefully chosen narrative is extremely important first step in humanizing the sterile digital world (Gilmetdinova et al., 2018) and setting up the working/learning environment.



**ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1**

*\* Asynchronous*

**YOU set up the scene!**

✓ **Introduction video**

- Welcome everyone
- Express enthusiasm
- Create excitement
- Calm fears
- Share something personal
- Be brief
- Practice

Personal Archive

**Figure 4.7: Establish social presence from Day 1: Introduction video**

In the upper right corner, there is a note that this is an asynchronous activity. These notes with asterisk appear on several slides where they indicate how the activity/strategy is delivered.

The next step gives guidelines on the introduction video we assign to our students (Figure 4.8. See also Appendix A, Slide #9). Given the technological challenges, instructors should consider accepting as many formats as they are comfortable with as long as they can compile a single video of the whole group. The visual on this slide provides comparison between the two major platforms where end users can upload their videos to *YouTube* and *Vimeo*.

## ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1

\*Asynchronous

## YOU set up the scene!

✓ Assign introduction video

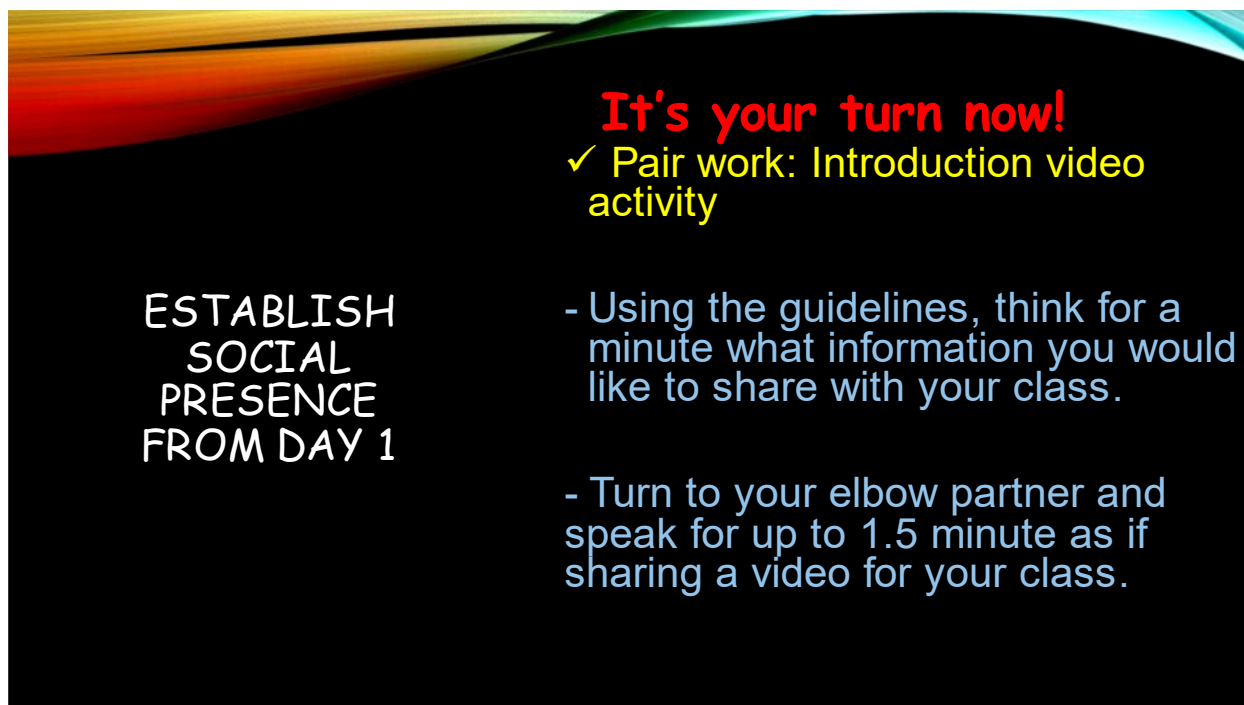
- Be flexible with the format
- Make a group video
- Share with the class

Functionality	YouTube		Vimeo	
	Free	Paid	Free	Paid
Free From Third Party Advertising				X
Access to a Large Audience with Analytics	X		X	X
Permits Commercial Content	X			X
Permits Product Demo & Tutorial Content	X			X
Retains Inactive Content Indefinitely	X		X	X
Storage of Original Quality/ Source Video				X
Password Protected Videos			X	X
Unlisted Videos	X			X
Unlimited Storage	X			X
Unlimited Bandwidth	X		X	X
Video Replacement/ Keeping the Same URL			X	X
Support of Camtasia Interactive Videos				X
Integration with TechSmith Camtasia & Snagit	X		X	X
Integration with TechSmith Jing				
Ability to store images				

https://www.techsmith.com/

**Figure 4.8: Assign Introduction video**

After this discussion, participants engage in pair work. They interact with their elbow partner, and after taking a minute to think about their narrative, they present their mock introduction video to their partner (Figure 4.9. See also Appendix A, Slide #10)



**It's your turn now!**

✓ **Pair work: Introduction video activity**

**ESTABLISH  
SOCIAL  
PRESENCE  
FROM DAY 1**

- Using the guidelines, think for a minute what information you would like to share with your class.
- Turn to your elbow partner and speak for up to 1.5 minute as if sharing a video for your class.

**Figure 4.9: Pair work: Introduction video activity**

In the next step, participants are presented the choice of three activities that address environmental acclimation (Figure 4.10. See also Appendix A, Slide #11). Obviously, students cannot be successful participants if they are unfamiliar or highly anxious about the software, platforms, apps, or programs they are using. The environmental acclimation scaffold at the beginning of the online course is as equally important as setting up the scene by introductions (Feng et al., 2017; Salmon, 2002). The emphasis is on three most popular modalities to teach technology to students. Screen casting a how-to video that the instructor records by themselves is recommended for introduction of unfamiliar programs, platforms, and software that include navigating multiple tools and options within them. Creating a written step-by-step tutorial with screen shots simplifies logging into different platforms or selecting from a range of options. Finally, today everything can be found on *YouTube*. Instructors can always resort to finding a quality video tutorial to address a technological challenge.

\*Asynchronous

# ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1

## Environmental Acclimation

✓ Set your class for success by “explaining” technology.

- Record yourself modeling (cast screen)
- Create a screen shot step-by-step tutorial
- Find a “how-to” YouTube video



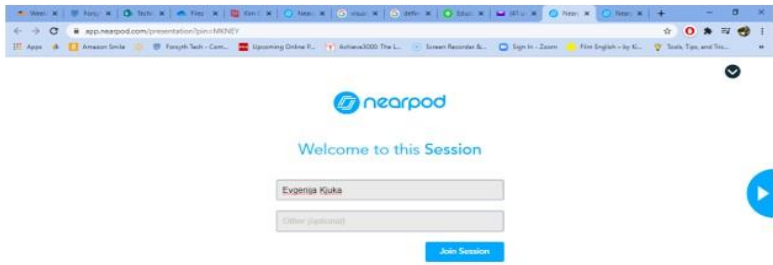
**Figure 4.10: Environmental Acclimation**

This slide is followed by a screen shot example from my private archive with simple instructions on what students need to do and what to expect (Figure 4.11. See also Appendix A, Slide #12).

2. When you are done with the power point, click on the link below:

<https://share.nearpod.com/vsph/71rYCdzFMu>

It will take you here:



Enter your REAL NAME in the first blank space and click JOIN SESSION.

**Figure 4.11: Screenshot with instructions**

In the next step, participants review four most utilized platforms for synchronous online communication: Zoom, Google Hangouts, Go To Meetings, and Facebook video rooms. The advantages and disadvantages are briefly discussed, as well as challenges instructors meet in their use (Figure 4.12. See also Appendix A, Slide #13). The instructor welcomes participants to share their personal experiences with any of these platforms with the audience. The slide incorporates a multicultural group of people banner as a visual.



**Figure 4.12: Platforms for synchronous online sessions**

After discussing the synchronous platforms, the workshop moves in the direction of unpacking relevant factors that pertain to cultural beliefs, perceptions, bias, stereotyping, and mutual respect (Figure 4.13. See also Appendix A, Slide #14). The discussion focuses on making expectations known, fostering genuine interest in others, and establishing a culture-nurturing model for the students (Shapiro et al., 2014).




# ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1

\*Synchronous & Asynchronous

## YOU set up the scene!

✓ Build on the initial connection

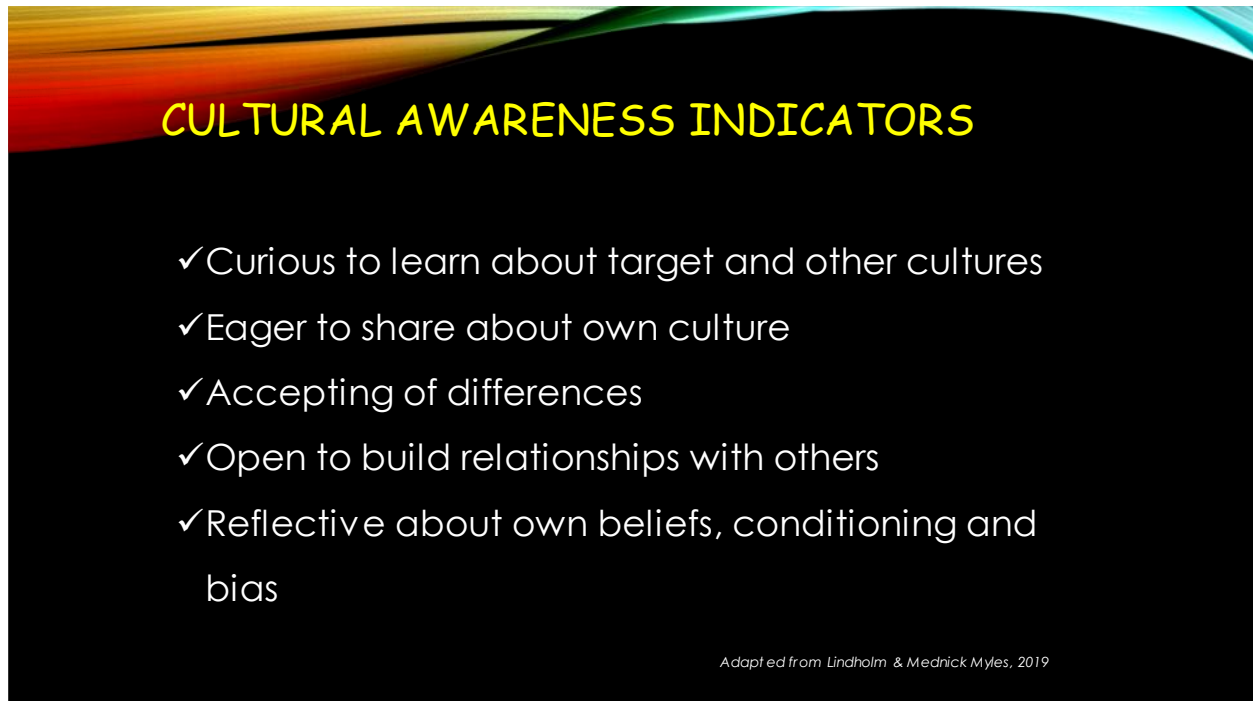
- Establish boundaries.
- Do **not** assume anything! Ask!
- Create a culture of genuine curiosity.
- Do your “homework”.
- Teach culture by learning culture.



https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/grouphappy-multi-ethnic-peoplestanding-together\_5547694.htm

**Figure 4.13: Tying in the element of culture**

In the next slide, adapted from Lindholm and Mednick Myles (2019), participants are presented a simplified bullet-list of the observable indicators that culturally aware individuals exhibit (Figure 4.14. See also Appendix A, Slide #15).



**Figure 4.14: Cultural awareness indicators**

### **Activities and Tips**

In the final stage, the workshop presents concrete activities and tips that add to the community building experience for our students. All activities are visually represented with samples from my personal archive to illustrate the concepts. The first tip is to prepare cheat sheets and frequently asked questions (FAQs) documents ahead of time (Figure 4.15. See also Appendix A, Slide #16). By doing this, instructors save time in answering multiple individual questions regarding the course, curriculum, assignments, attendance, and technology. These documents can be personalized to fit any online course and address multiple needs.

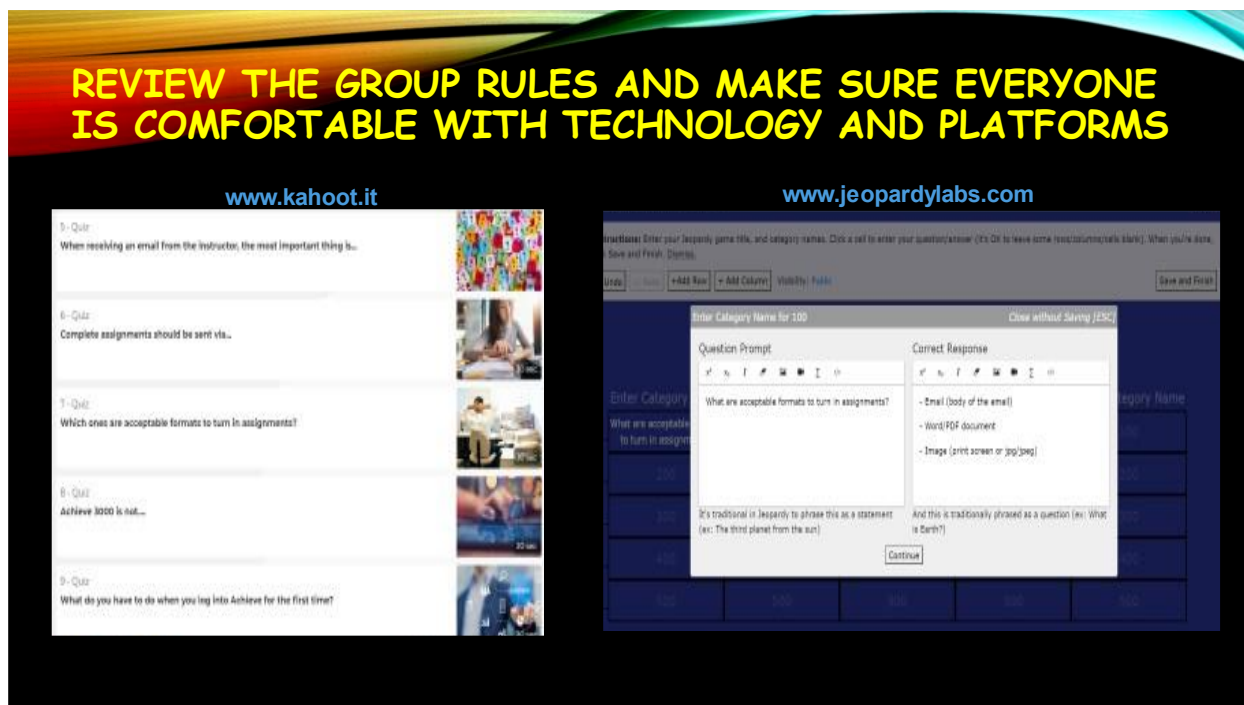
## CREATE CHEAT SHEETS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) DOCUMENT(S)

Classes REQUIREMENTS & Description		
	Morning class	Evening class
Total weekly credit	12 hours	6 hours
Teacher gives assignments (TGA)	YES (additional work that you do after Zoom meetings to clarify concepts, practice, and reinforce what was learned. Requires turning in work back to the teacher via email)	NO I can still send you the work I will give the morning class, and it will be up to you to decide if you want to do it.
Achieve 3000	YES - 6 hours required weekly if you turn in teacher given assignments - if you are not completing TGAs, 8 hours required weekly - You can do MORE than this if you want to	YES - 4 hours required weekly - You can do MORE if you want to
Live ZOOM lesson(s)	YES - Twice (2 times) a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. - ZOOM lasts 1.5 - 2 hours per session	YES - Once (1 time) a week, Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. - ZOOM lasts 1 - 1.5 hours per session

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):	
Will students be allowed to be in both classes?	NO. You have to choose a class and stick with it. It's either morning or evening. **If you work SHIFTS, reach out individually to discuss your options.
Are students allowed to "skip" Zoom sessions?	YES and NO. We are all adults here and life happens. Some days you might need to be absent and that's ok. Do remember though that by signing the ELA student agreement, you are signing a promise to do at least 80% of the work, so plan your time accordingly.
Are students allowed to "skip" Teacher Given Assignments?	YES and NO. In the 12-hour class you are given the option to do "less" assignments but compensate this by doing extra work in Achieve. In the 6-hour class you won't have required TGAs (they are optional).
Can students join a Zoom session after it has started, or leave before it's over?	YES. Make sure you turn off camera/microphone if you are leaving for a brief time, or just message me through the chat option that you have to leave completely. You DO NOT have to give me reasons or inform the whole group.
Can students do only ZOOM and assignments and skip Achieve 3000?	Hard NO. Achieve 3000 is a key component of the program and it cannot be omitted.

**Figure 4.15: Cheat sheets and FAQs documents**

Repetition and review are vital to memorizing overwhelming amounts of new information. Another way to recycle this information is to pair it with platforms that instructors intend to use throughout the course. Here, I suggest the use of Kahoot and Jeopardy Labs (Figure 4.16. See also Appendix A, Slide #17). Both platforms have a free and a paid version and allow for students to work as individuals or teams, asynchronously or synchronously. They come with a huge database of previous users' templates that are highly customizable to any content, which is a great advantage for the instructor.



**Figure 4.16: Using Kahoot and Jeopardy Labs**

Another great platform that is highly interactive is Padlet. In this part of the workshop, participants are provided visual representations of the advantages that Padlet can offer in the process of community building. Padlet is a free resource where instructors choose from several available templates and customize them to suit their needs. Students access the template by simple click on a link. The Map Template is incredibly unique as it presents an opportunity for culturally relevant sharing and learning. Students drop a pin on the map to indicate their country of origin and share information about their country, culture, customs, traditions (Figure 4.17. See also Appendix A, Slide #18). The map can be zoomed in and out, which gives students the opportunity to pinpoint exact locations within a country. They can also use a search function to find a location. Once a pin is dropped, students can open a text box and write as much or as little as they wish. They can attach videos, images, links, and audio to support their text (Figure 4.18. See also Appendix A, Slide #19).

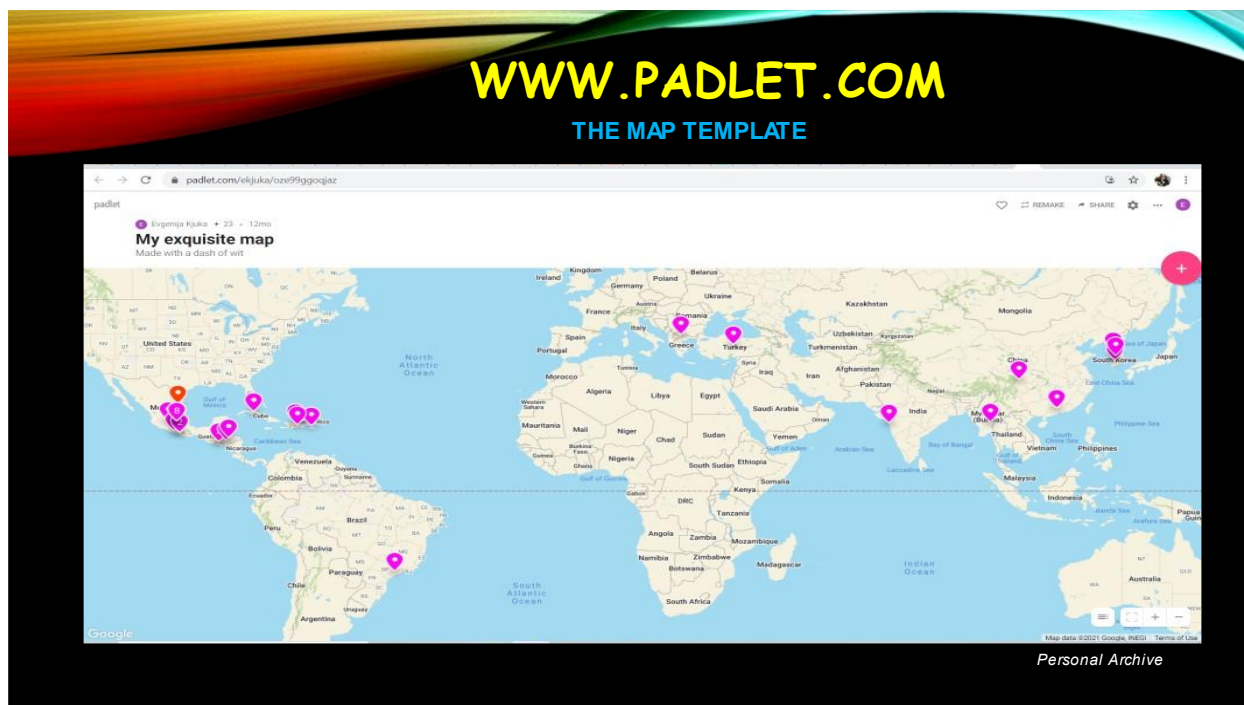
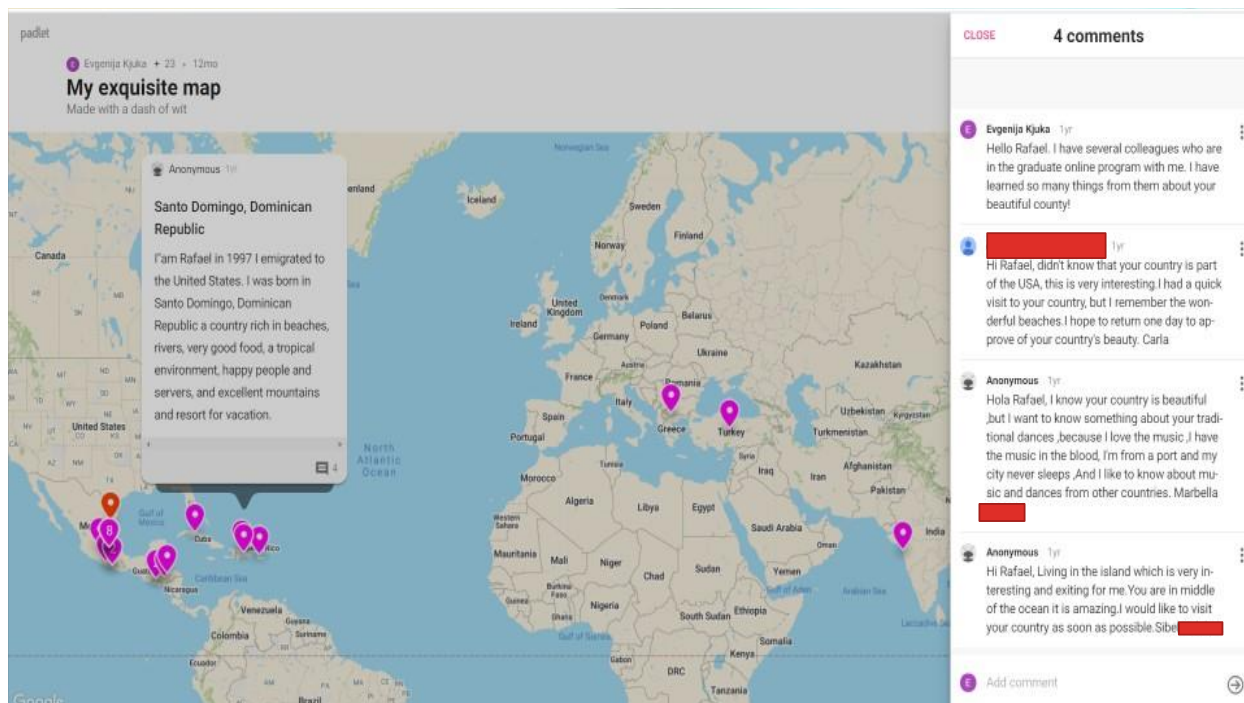


Figure 4.17: The map template on Padlet



Figure 4.18: Students can interact with audio and visual support

Finally, they have the ability to respond to other students' posts by commenting, asking questions, and chatting (Figure 4.19. See also Appendix A, Slide #20)



**Figure 4.19: Students engage in conversation**

The final Padlet template featured in the workshop is the Wall template. It shows students' responses on an instructor assigned topic (Figure 4.20. See also Appendix A, Slide #21). This sample from my personal archive is not selected accidentally. Students are given a safe space where they can express their expectations, fears, challenges, and frustrations. It lessens their anxiety to know that they are not alone, and their emotions are shared by others in the group (Gilmetdinova et al., 2018; Hellman, 2019; Rose, 2015; Rovai et al., 2005; Shapiro et al., 2014; Trang et al., 2013)





**Figure 4.20: Safe space to share emotions and challenges on Padlet**

At this stage of the workshop, the focus shifts to social media. I chose to elaborate on Facebook as a widely used social network that offers multiple opportunities to build an online community (Figure 4.21. See also Appendix A, Slide #22). Currently, most people have a personal Facebook page, and it is easier than ever to create a private group where only class participants can join. People are social beings, and sometimes the disconnect that works to their disadvantage in online learning, functions as an advantage in their social relationships. It is less intrusive to one's personal space to ask a question or request help in an online space. Facebook groups can be used for announcements, questions, reminders, mental breaks, humor, and teaching. Since people experience social media as a more informal setting, they are likely to be less anxious to share in that space. At present, Facebook offers group text messaging, video conferencing, audio only messages (as part of the messenger platform), and breakout rooms, which are great for small group work.



**Figure 4.21: Facebook as a community building factor**

Slide #23 shows a screenshot of one such group where I shared some funny photos with the students. It also demonstrates how I used this post as a teachable moment by referring to the idiomatic language and defining an idiom I used. There is also an excerpt of a message I sent to a student after she had her baby (Figure 4.22. See also Appendix A, Slide #23).



ESL Level 5 Spring Quarter 2020

Evgenija Kjuka is feeling amused.

These funny pics/photos contain some idiomatic language and deal with the dual (sometimes triple) meaning of words in English and how people understand them. This is SUCH an ESL thing 😊😊😊 If you understand the jokes, pat yourself on the back!

\*pat yourself on the back = congratulate/praise yourself for a job well done

Doctor: It hurts when I touch my shoulder.  
Patient: Then don't touch it.  
Doc: That'll be \$40.

Would you like a drink?  
What are my options?  
You or me?

Cop: seen anything unusual?  
Me: a dolphin with a hat once.  
Cop: I mean around here.  
Me: nah they live in water.

Is this good for sweeps?  
No, it kills them.

Me: this is too hard!

Good morning! Congratulations on your baby girl ❤️ I hope both, you and the baby are doing well. I'd like to ask for your permission share the news with the ESL group and would also like to have your address. Stay safe 🙏

Feb 11, 2021, 10:16 PM

**Figure 4.23: Using Facebook to connect learners**

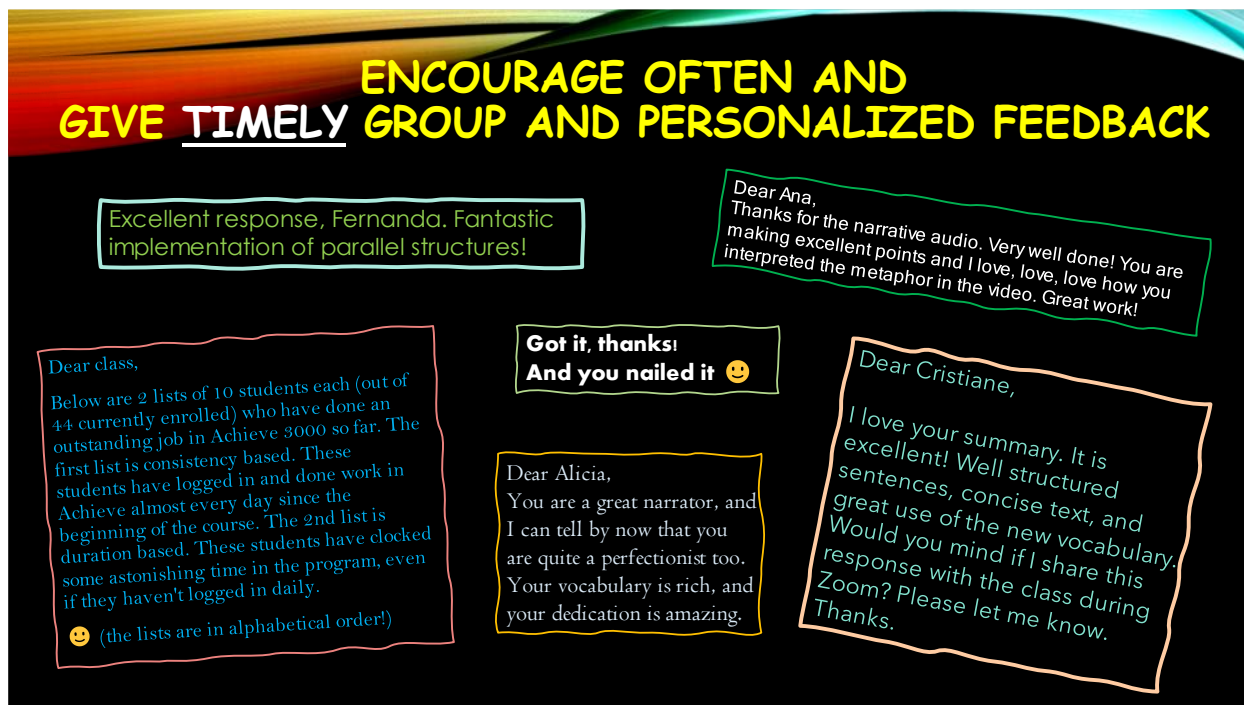
The final stage of the workshop focuses on feedback. This section opens with a quote about the importance of feedback (Figure 4.24. See also Appendix A, Slide #24).

**"Learners need endless feedback more than they need endless teaching."**

-Grant Wiggins, Less Teaching and More Feedback?, ASCD Inservice,

**Figure 4.24: Feedback as a factor**

Through real examples from my personal archive, participants have the opportunity to discuss different types of individual and group feedback, as well as when, how, and why we should encourage our online adult learners through timely and regular feedback (Figure 4.25. See also Appendix A, Slide #25).



**Figure 4.25: Samples of different types of feedback**

## Conclusion

The workshop ends with a figurative visual encouragement to all participants to embrace the work they need to put in the beginning of an online course as a long-term investment (Figure 4.26. See also Appendix A, Slide #26). By investing in building a solid online community, they get to reap the benefits of having a smoother transition, motivated learners, better retention, increased engagement, and greater achievement (Armellini & De Stefani, 2016; Guitierrez-

Santiuste & Gallego-Arrufat, 2017; Guler, 2018; Richardson et al., 2017; Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2017).



**Figure 4.26: Instructor's initial efforts are a long-term investment**

Finally, the workshop concludes with a 3-2-1 activity that acts as a ticket out-the-door. Participants are encouraged to use a sticky note to share 3 things they learned, 2 things they would like to try, and 1 question they might still have (Figure 4.27. See also Appendix A, Slide #27). The sticky notes would be collected on a group poster upon leaving. This is an opportunity for participant to reflect on the workshop as a whole and their gains of the community building input. As a standard, participants are orally encouraged to rate their professional development experience by completing a Workshop Evaluation form that is distributed before the beginning of the session and is anonymous (See Appendix B, Workshop Evaluation). The sum of ratings and suggestions is used to improve the quality of the workshop in the future and enhance the participants' experience overall.

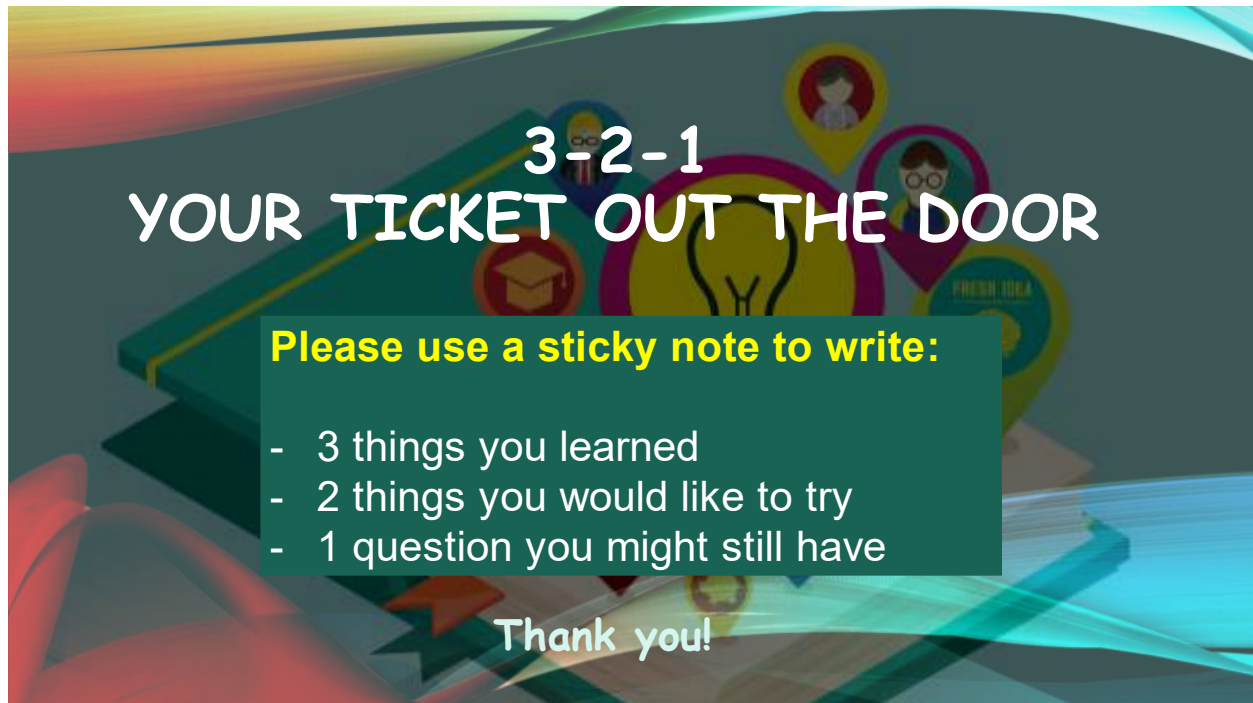


Figure 4.27: Ticket out-the-door

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

It is part of human nature to fear change, especially if that change is unexpected, unwanted, and forced. In an educational setting, years of research and preparation pave the road to step-by-step changes that take place in the classroom. Approaches, methods, techniques, and strategies are carefully examined and evaluated before they are implemented in a learners' setting.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, the world experienced a global closure like no other in modern times. It directly affected learning communities that have never been designed to take place in a virtual setting by imposing an unexpected transition to a fully online model. For many adult learners at community colleges the shift imposed new challenges: limited or no access to internet, lack of devices or having to share with other members of the family, inadequate spaces for learning, loss of jobs and childcare, and inability for face-to-face interactions and opportunities to use the language in authentic surroundings.

The same was true for instructors who worked with adult populations. Being tech savvy did not automatically imply that one knew what to do with their students or how to teach ESL in the newly created circumstances. Many educational institutions had long had online learning platforms such as Moodle or Blackboard, but ESL instructors had not been trained how to use them. On top of that, knowing that due to the aforementioned factors most of our adult ESL students had neither activated nor used their college emails, we were facing a logistical nightmare even if we tried to utilize any of these learning systems.

However, as Benjamin Franklin once said: “Out of adversity comes opportunity,” so we all realized that we needed to rise above the occasion. It is also part of human nature to adapt and seek solutions. This trial-and-error time proved to be the best teacher in how to overcome the sense of isolation and bring people together in a thriving learning community.

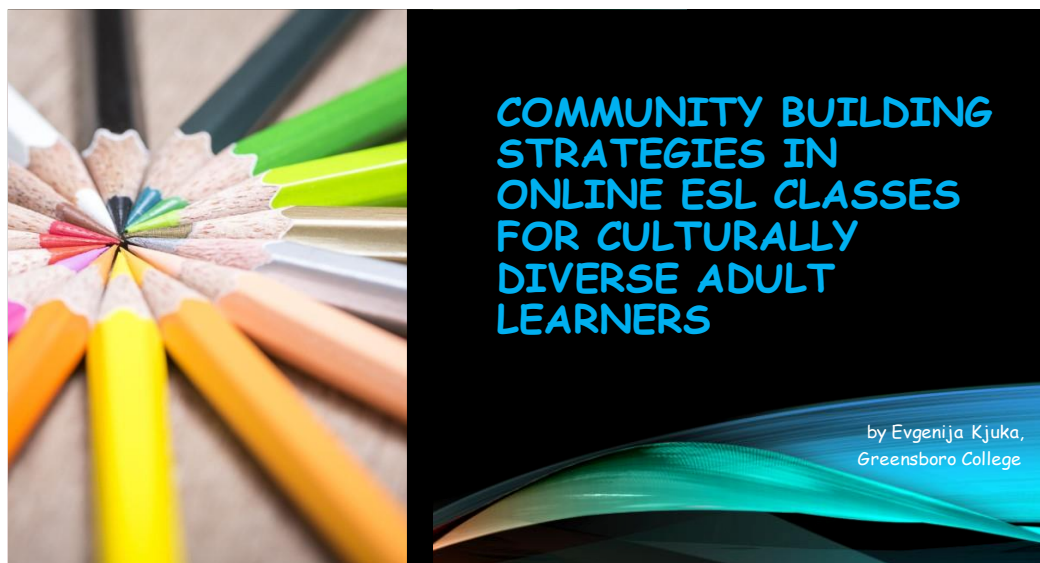
This workshop offers simple but tested activities and strategies that function as tools to bridge the transition. They are by no means the absolute or the only ones that can be used in building a community. During the transition period, I experimented with different platforms, tools, websites, and applications. The ones shared through the workshop proved to be the most effective, and my students responded to them by being active, engaged, and productive participants during our courses.

In retrospect, the process of researching for the thesis revealed a sea of ideas, options, and possibilities. The role of the ESL instructors and the necessity for them to address numerous significant factors involved in teaching CDL learners is irreplaceable. I realized that as an individual, an instructor, or even as a researcher, I cannot provide a global, comprehensive solution to the disconnect that comes with fully online ESL classes for adults. However, I can make a difference for a group of learners and further develop these tools to better serve and connect them.

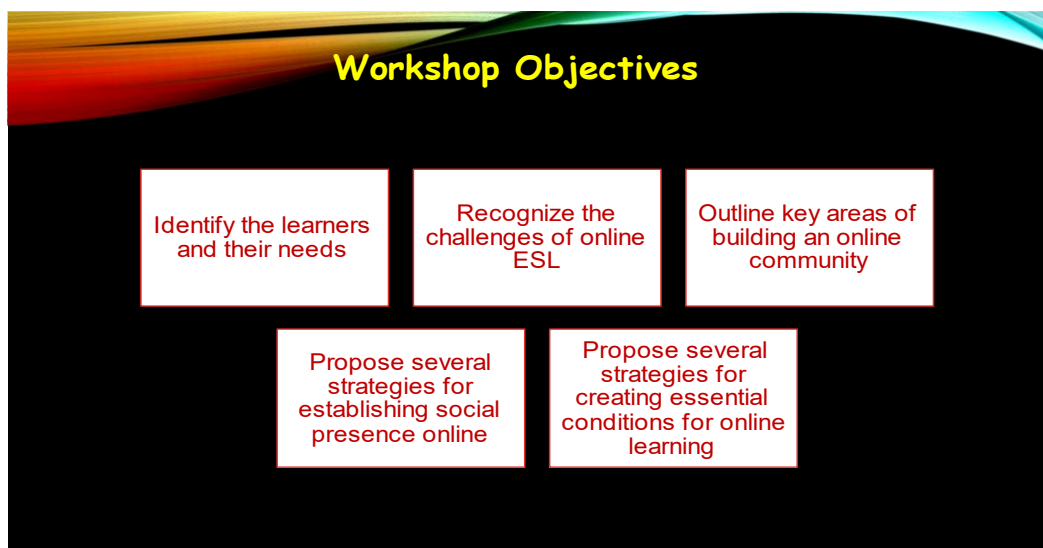
Professional development workshops have great potential to stir creative spirits. I hope that workshop participants will be able to implement, modify, improve, and build on some of these suggestions. Others who seek community building solutions for online ESL learners might create better and more sophisticated proposals. In the near future, community colleges might work together to address community building for adult ESL learners and propose more streamlined solutions for students and instructors alike.

## **Appendices**

## Appendix A: Power Point Presentation



**Slide #1: Title Page**



**Slide #2: Workshop objectives**



## WHO ARE OUR LEARNERS AND WHAT THEY BRING TO THE TABLE

- Unique (ethnicity, age, education, religion, cultural norms, experiences...)
- Autonomous, resourceful & problem -solving individuals
- Have personal goals
- Possess funds of knowledge and linguistic capital



Personal archive

Slide #3: Who are our learners and what they bring to the table

## THE DISCONNECT CHALLENGES

### Environmental

- "Far from the eyes, far from the heart"
- Lack of auditory/visual stimuli
- No face-to-face interaction and body language
- Time & space issues
- The "this is not for me" attitude
- "What if I am the worst?"

What we think we say

is often not what our

students perceive



<https://images.app.goo.gl/X19GKRUGtLJPXU8>

### Technological

- The no-tech student
- The tech expert student
- The phone only student
- Internet
- Different platforms
- Camera/video anxiety

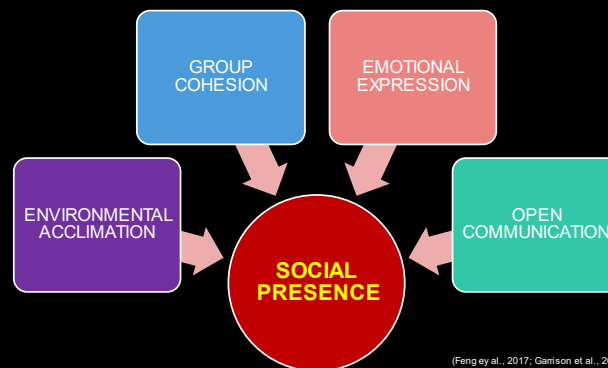
Slide #4: The disconnect challenges

*“Even the most advanced technological tools are just that: tools. For language instruction, ...the personal touch cannot be overstated. Language is meant for communication, and while computers can simulate this interaction, they fall short of producing meaningful social and emotional relationships .... Technology is a tool. We are the teachers”.*

*Glenda Rose (Perspectives on Teaching Adults in the Digital World, 2015)*

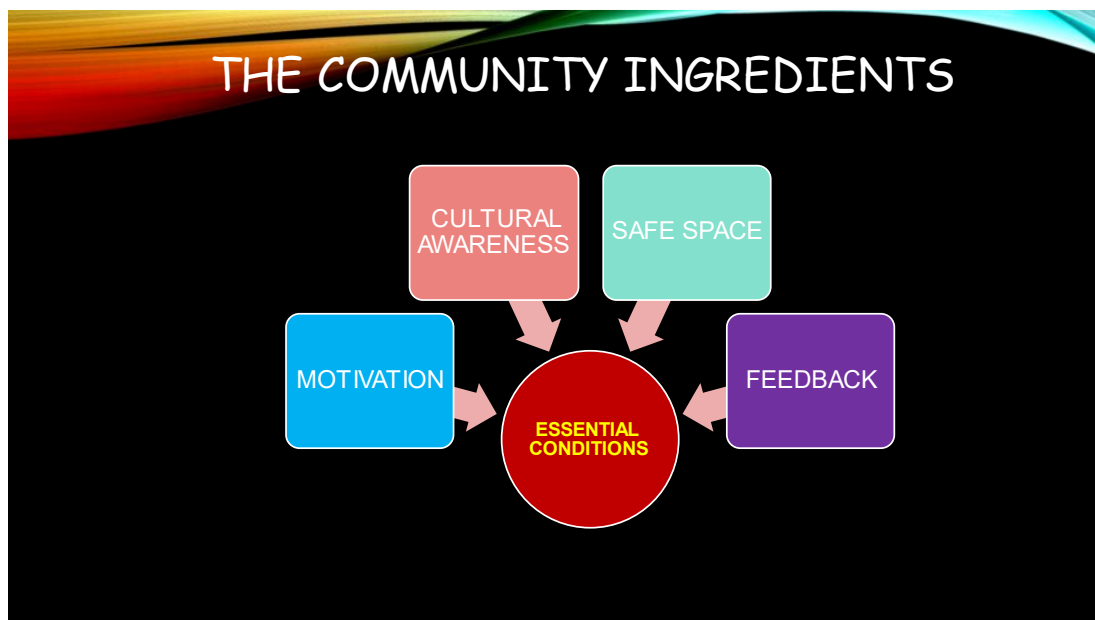
**Slide #5: Quote by Glenda Rose**

## THE COMMUNITY INGREDIENTS




(Feng et al., 2017; Garrison et al., 2000)

**Slide #6: The Community ingredients: Social presence**



Slide #7: The Community ingredients: Essential conditions

## ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1



Personal Archive

\*Asynchronous

YOU set up the scene!

✓ Introduction video

- Welcome everyone
- Express enthusiasm
- Create excitement
- Calm fears
- Share something personal
- Be brief
- Practice

Slide #8: Establish social presence from Day 1: Introduction video

**ESTABLISH  
SOCIAL  
PRESENCE  
FROM DAY 1**

\*Asynchronous

**YOU set up the scene!**

✓ **Assign introduction video**

- Be flexible with the format
- Make a group video
- Share with the class

Functionality	YouTube		Vimeo	
	Free	Free	Free	Paid
Free From Third Party Advertising				X
Access to a Large Audience with Analytics	X		X	X
Permits Commercial Content	X			X
Permits Product Demo & Tutorial Content	X			X
Retains Inactive Content Indefinitely	X		X	X
Storage of Original Quality/ Source Video				X
Password Protected Videos			X	X
Unlisted Videos	X			X
Unlimited Storage	X			X
Unlimited Bandwidth	X		X	X
Video Replacement/ Keeping the Same URL			X	X
Support of Camtasia Interactive Videos				X
Integration with TechSmith Camtasia & Snagit	X		X	X
Integration with TechSmith Jing				
Ability to store images				

<https://www.techsmith.com/>

**Slide #9: Assign Introduction video**

**ESTABLISH  
SOCIAL  
PRESENCE  
FROM DAY 1**

**It's your turn now!**

✓ **Pair work: Introduction video activity**

- Using the guidelines, think for a minute what information you would like to share with your class.
- Turn to your elbow partner and speak for up to 1.5 minute as if sharing a video for your class.

**Slide #10: Pair work: Introduction video activity**

\*Asynchronous

## Environmental Acclimation

**ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1**

✓ Set your class for success by “explaining” technology.

- Record yourself modeling (cast screen)
- Create a screen shot step-by-step tutorial
- Find a “how-to” YouTube video

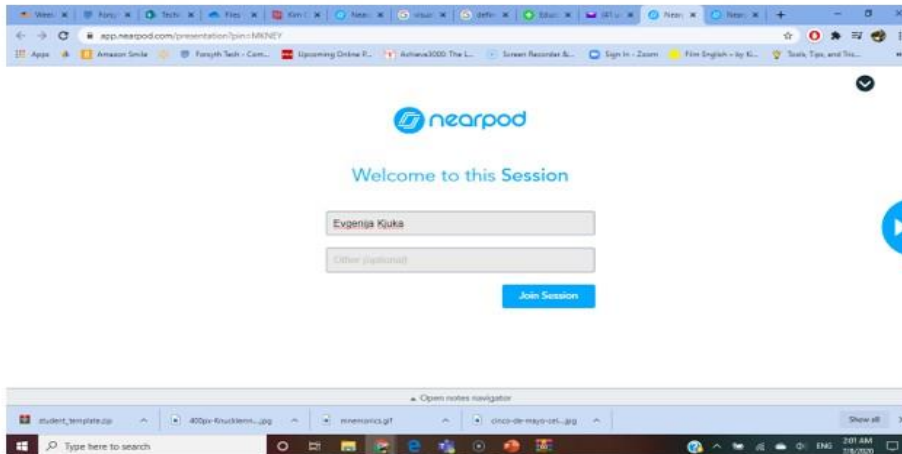


### Slide #11: Environmental Acclimation

2. When you are done with the power point, click on the link below:

<https://share.nearpod.com/vsph/71rYCdzFMu>

It will take you here:



Enter your REAL NAME in the first blank space and click JOIN SESSION.

### Slide # 12: Screenshot with instructions

## ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1

\*Synchronous

### YOU set up the scene!

✓ Set a schedule for LIVE sessions  
(and stick to it)

- Zoom
- Google Hangouts
- Go To Meetings
- Facebook video rooms



[https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/grouphappy-multiethnic-peoplestanding-together\\_5547694.htm](https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/grouphappy-multiethnic-peoplestanding-together_5547694.htm)

Slide #13: Platforms for synchronous online sessions


## ESTABLISH SOCIAL PRESENCE FROM DAY 1

\*Synchronous & Asynchronous

### YOU set up the scene!

✓ Build on the initial connection

- Establish boundaries.
- Do **not** assume anything! Ask!
- Create a culture of genuine curiosity.
- Do your “homework”.
- Teach culture by learning culture.



[https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/grouphappy-multiethnic-peoplestanding-together\\_5547694.htm](https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/grouphappy-multiethnic-peoplestanding-together_5547694.htm)

Slide #14: Tying in the element of culture

## CULTURAL AWARENESS INDICATORS

- ✓ Curious to learn about target and other cultures
- ✓ Eager to share about own culture
- ✓ Accepting of differences
- ✓ Open to build relationships with others
- ✓ Reflective about own beliefs, conditioning and bias

*Adapted from Lindholm & Medrick Myles, 2019*

### Slide #15: Cultural awareness indicators

## CREATE CHEAT SHEETS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) DOCUMENT(S)

Classes REQUIREMENTS & Description		
	Morning class 12 hours	Evening class 6 hours
Total weekly credit	YES	NO
Teacher given assignments (TGA)	(additional work that you do after Zoom meetings to clarify, concepts, practice, and reinforce what was learned. <u>Requires turning in work back to the teacher via email</u> )	I can still send you the work I will give the morning class, and it will be up to you to decide if you want to do it.
Achieve 3000	YES - 6 hours required weekly if you turn in teacher given assignments - If you are not completing TGAs, 8 hours required weekly - You can do MORE than this if you want to	YES - 4 hours required weekly - You can do MORE if you want to
Live ZOOM lesson(s)	YES - Twice (2 times) a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. - ZOOM lasts 1.5 - 2 hours per session	YES - Once (1 time) a week, Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. - ZOOM lasts 1 - 1.5 hours per session

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):	
Will students be allowed to be in both classes?	NO. You <u>have</u> to choose a class and stick with it. It's either morning or evening. **If you work SHIFTS, reach out individually to discuss your options.
Are students allowed to "skip" Zoom sessions?	YES and NO. We are all adults here and life happens. Some days you might need to be absent and that's ok. Do remember though that by signing the ELA student agreement, you are <u>signing a promise</u> to do at least 80% of the work, so plan your time accordingly.
Are students allowed to "skip" Teacher Given Assignments?	YES and NO. In the 12-hour class you are given the <u>option</u> to do "less" assignments but <u>compensate</u> this by doing extra work in Achieve. In the 6-hour class you <u>won't</u> have required TGAs (they are optional).
Can students join a Zoom session after it has started, or leave before it's over?	YES. Make sure you turn off camera/microphone if you are leaving for a brief time, or just message me through the chat option that you have to leave completely. You DO NOT have to give me reasons or inform the whole group.
Can students do only ZOOM and assignments and skip Achieve 3000?	Hard NO. Achieve 3000 is a key component of the program and it cannot be omitted.

### Slide #16: Cheat sheets and FAQs documents



A screenshot of the website WWW.PADLET.COM, which is titled "THE MAP TEMPLATE". The page displays a world map with numerous red location pins. A sidebar on the left shows a search bar and a list of locations including Mexico, Central America, Caribbean Sea, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The map is titled "My exquisite map" and includes a sidebar with a search bar and a list of locations. The website URL is visible in the browser address bar.

## Slide #18: The map template on Padlet





Personal Archive

### Slide #19: Students can interact with audio and visual support

The image shows a screenshot of a Padlet board titled "My exquisite map" with the subtitle "Made with a dash of wit". The board features a map of the Americas with a text box that reads: "Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic I am Rafael in 1997 I emigrated to the United States. I was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic a country rich in beaches, rivers, very good food, a tropical environment, happy people and servers, and excellent mountains and resort for vacation." Below the text is a small image of a beach. The sidebar on the right shows four comments:

- Evgenia Kyjka** 1yr: Hello Rafael. I have several colleagues who are in the graduate online program with me. I have learned so many things from them about your beautiful county!
- [Redacted]** 1yr: Hi Rafael, didn't know that your country is part of the USA, this is very interesting. I had a quick visit to your country, but I remember the wonderful beaches. I hope to return one day to approve of your country's beauty. Carla
- Anonymous** 1yr: Hola Rafael, I know your country is beautiful but I want to know something about your traditional dances, because I love the music. I have the music in the blood, I'm from a port and my city never sleeps. And I like to know about music and dances from other countries. Marbella [Redacted]
- Anonymous** 1yr: Hi Rafael, Living in the island which is very interesting and exiting for me. You are in middle of the ocean it is amazing. I would like to visit your country as soon as possible. Sibe [Redacted]

### Slide #20: Students engage in conversation



Slide #21: Safe space to share emotions and challenges on Padlet

## The Power of Social Media

### Facebook

- group (public or private)
- page
- messenger (chat or voice message)
- rooms

Slide #22: Facebook as a community building factor

ESL Level 5 Spring Quarter 2020

Evgenija Kjuka is feeling amused.  
Admin · June 11, 2020 ·

These funny pics/photos contain some idiomatic language and deal with the dual (sometimes triple) meaning of words in English and how people understand them. This is SUCH an ESL thing 😊😊😊 if you understand the jokes, pat yourself on the back!

\*pat yourself on the back = congratulate/praise yourself for a job well done

Find time and space for humor...  
... and students' personal achievements/ celebrations/ milestones.

Good morning! Congratulations on your baby girl 🍀 I hope both, you and the baby are doing well.  
I'd like to ask for your permission share the news with the ESL group and would also like to have your address. Stay safe 🙏

Slide #23: Using Facebook to connect learners

**"Learners need endless feedback more than they need endless teaching."**

-Grant Wiggins, Less Teaching and More Feedback?, ASCD Inservice,

Slide #24: Feedback as a factor

## ENCOURAGE OFTEN AND GIVE TIMELY GROUP AND PERSONALIZED FEEDBACK

Excellent response, Fernanda. Fantastic implementation of parallel structures!

Dear Ana,  
Thanks for the narrative audio. Very well done! You are making excellent points and I love, love, love how you interpreted the metaphor in the video. Great work!

Dear class,  
Below are 2 lists of 10 students each (out of 44 currently enrolled) who have done an outstanding job in Achieve 3000 so far. The first list is consistency based. These students have logged in and done work in Achieve almost every day since the beginning of the course. The 2nd list is duration based. These students have clocked some astonishing time in the program, even if they haven't logged in daily.  
😊 (the lists are in alphabetical order!)

**Got it, thanks!  
And you nailed it 😊**

Dear Alicia,  
You are a great narrator, and I can tell by now that you are quite a perfectionist too. Your vocabulary is rich, and your dedication is amazing.

Dear Cristiane,  
I love your summary. It is excellent! Well structured sentences, concise text, and great use of the new vocabulary. Would you mind if I share this response with the class during Zoom? Please let me know. Thanks.

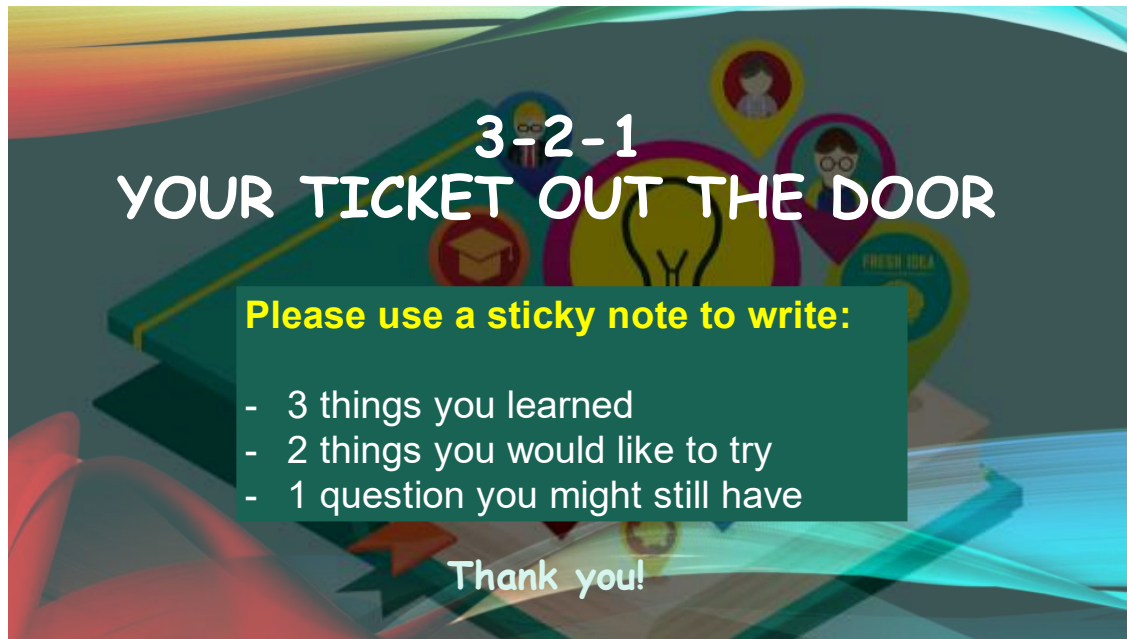
Slide #25: Samples of different types of feedback

**BY PUTTING IN  
THE INITIAL  
WORK,  
YOU ARE MAKING  
AN INVESTMENT!**



Slide #26: Instructor's initial efforts are a long-term investment





**Slide #27: Ticket out-the-door**

## Appendix B: Workshop Evaluation

### Workshop Evaluation Form

Your feedback is critical for me to ensure that I am meeting your needs and my planned objectives. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a minute to share your opinion with me so I can serve you better. This form is anonymous and does not require any personal information.

---

Workshop title: **Community Building Strategies in Online ESL Classes for Culturally Diverse Adult**

**Learners**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: **Evgenija Kjuka**

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1. The content was presented as in the description	1	2	3	4	5
2. The workshop was applicable to my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The workshop was well-paced within the allotted time.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The presenter was a good communicator.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The material was presented in an organized manner.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The presenter was knowledgeable on the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I would recommend the workshop to other educators.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I would be interested to attend a follow-up on this subject.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Given the topic, the workshop was:	<input type="checkbox"/> Too short	<input type="checkbox"/> Right length	<input type="checkbox"/> Too long		
10. In your opinion, the workshop is:	<input type="checkbox"/> Introductory	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced		
11. Please rate the following:					
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The workshop overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Any suggestions for improvement?					

**Thank you!**

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